



DIVERSIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

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FEDERAL MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES THE VALUE OF DIVERSIONAL THERAPY THROUGH MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS TODAY....

The Diversional Therapy Association of Australia National Chair, Vanessa Ogborne, has applauded the Federal Minister for Ageing, the Honorable Santo Santoro for his recognition of the valuable contribution that Diversional Therapy makes to the psychosocial care of our older Australians.

In recent discussions with the Minister and fellow senior representative from the Association, Jacqueline Quirke, Senator Santoro acknowledged that as the third largest direct care providers within aged care in Australia, Diversional Therapy practitioners are integral to best practice residential and community based services. He stated "Please be assured of the very high regard in which I hold their professionalism and their important contribution to the wellbeing of older Australians". The Association raised concerns over the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) and its lack of recognition of psychosocial care needs of people in residential aged care. Following the provision of information on the availability of objective assessment tools by the DTAA the Minister has asked the Department of Health and Ageing to provide him with advice on this issue.

Demonstrating commitment to the ongoing provision of excellence within his portfolio, the Minister has announced his decision to include Diversional Therapy as a priority area for this next round of the Better Skills for Better Care program. Jacqueline Quirke believes this decision will provide a much needed boost for the upgrading of skills of those working in the provision of leisure and recreational programs and in turn an increase in the quality of service provision for residents.

The Minister has also announced his support for the DTAA's Inaugural Study Tour to Japan in October, through the sponsorship of \$10,000 to the Association. As recognised world leaders in the profession of Diversional Therapy, a delegation of 25 have been invited to travel to Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka to present a range of research and practice based papers at both National and International Symposiums. Study Tour Coordinator, Linda Martin states "this sponsorship will now ensure the best outcomes possible for both the Japanese and Australian Associations, their members and client groups."

Vanessa Ogborne believes that a strong platform for further consultation between the Association and Federal Government has been established. Vanessa stated "It is clear to this Association that Senator Santoro is not only prepared to listen to the concerns raised within the aged care industry, but to respond in a positive, timely and collaborative manner".

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